



Los Angeles County  
Department of Regional Planning

*Planning for the Challenges Ahead*



James E. Hartl AICP  
Director of Planning

DATE: June 9, 2005

TO: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair  
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: James E. Hartl, AICP, Director  
Department of Regional Planning

SUBJECT: **RESPONSE TO BOARD ON PACIFIC INDUSTRIAL MINERALS  
SURFACE MINING PERMIT NO. 00-090**  
(Motion of May 10, 2005 – Syn. # 133-A)

At your May 10, 2005 meeting, your honorable Board requested that staff of the Department of Regional Planning (DRP) attend the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) scoping meeting regarding a proposed surface mining project applied for by Pacific Industrial Minerals (PIM). The following staff report summarizes the proceedings of that meeting.

The USFS held a scoping meeting for Pacific Industrial Minerals (County SMP 00-090) on May 26, 2005 at the City Hall of the City of Santa Clarita. The meeting was attended by representatives from the USFS, County staff from the Department of Regional Planning (Christina Tran and Joseph Decruyenaere), officials from the City of Santa Clarita, the president of the Agua Dulce Town Council, the applicant, a member from SAFE (Safe Action For the Environment), and a number of concerned residents from the area.

During the introduction, the USFS presented a brief overview of their environmental review process and procedures, and indicated that they have not yet determined whether an Environmental Assessment (EA) or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be required for this project; these are the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) equivalents of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) mitigated negative declaration (MND) and environmental impact report (EIR), respectively. The USFS emphasized that since a locatable mineral mining claim is involved, under the general mining law of 1872, the applicant has a legal right to that mineral. Therefore, the only discretionary act afforded to the USFS is to determine the scope of and how to restrict the mining operation which may be carried out by setting terms and conditions for the operation.

Following the introduction, Mr. John Heter, General Manager of PIM, presented his Plan of Operation (POO) and answered specific questions from those in attendance. Mr. Heter provided a brief history of the existing mine, which has been in existence since the 1950s, and stressed that his current POO is more environmentally friendly than a previous one. The currently proposed mining production of 150,000 tons per year is less than the amount previously approved for the subject mine. In addition, the processing plant would be relocated to an onsite location, which will result in the reduction of truck trips on Soledad Canyon Road. Furthermore, mining will occur on a “campaign” basis of four to six times a year for approximately three weeks during each “campaign” rather than as a year round operation. Dust would be managed through the use of water as a dust suppressant and the use of a bag house as a dust collector in the processing plant. Finally, the proposed expansion bridge would replace the previous 1996 culvert crossing, which was washed out during this year’s storms, but with a lessened impact to the drainage course. Mr. Hank Fritsche, a supporter of the project, also spoke to confirm Mr. Heter’s assertions.

Approximately 17 other speakers, including several officials from the City of Santa Clarita, provided comments at the meeting. Many of the speakers shared similar concerns and emphasized the need for better disclosure and notice to all interested parties of the USFS process. Comments or concerns raised at the meeting included the following:

- A joint CEQA/NEPA document, nothing less than an EIR/EIS, should be prepared
- Traffic impact (safety)
- Level of service (LOS) is already bad, added traffic congestion due to slow trucks
- Ingress / Egress at site
- Soledad Canyon Road is the only evacuation route to the east if Highway 14 were to be closed
- Rivers End Park is the closest residential group and may have difficulty evacuating because there is no stop lights/traffic controls
- Road wear & tear / rail haul is preferred
- The impact of 25 truck trips is not equivalent to the impact of passenger vehicles on the road
- Water supply and water source
- State Water and ground water are already overtaxed
- Should require re-use of water
- Hauled water may not be sustainable
- Water would essentially come from Santa Clara River
- Water quality (pollution to river and ground water)
- Where things are going to drain
- Leachate in water
- Air quality and PM10, PM 2.5 pollutants
- Santa Clarita Valley is the poorest air quality in the county, which is a non-attainment area

- Stationary & non-stationary pollution sources
- Health risk concerns
- Dust
- Cumulative impacts (must look at past, current, and foreseeable projects in the area)
- Community dynamic has changed with CEMEX
- The area is now more urbanized than it was during the original approved project
- Air, water pollution, traffic
- Any other mining claims filed with BLM in the area
- Major growth in the area
- Noise from mining and truck traffic
- Affect quality of life and property value
- Need a fully engineered bridge
- The actual previous operation had been very small (24,000 tons per year) compared to what is requested now
- Site has been inactive for five years and has not been reclaimed
- Five thousand dollar bond is inadequate
- No plan shown on plant operation (crushing plant needs to be in project description)
- Biological impacts
- Operation may impact endangered species

In summary, although the subject comment period will end on June 13, 2005, the USFS indicated that it will accept comments up to the day of their decision. However, only those who comment within the stated deadline will have standing to appeal the project during the appeal period. There was a request from SAFE to extend the comment period. The County had made a similar request pursuant to our May 17, 2005 letter.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Daryl Koutnik of my staff at extension 4-6461.

JEH:DLK:cdt

Cc: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors  
County Counsel  
Chief Administrative Office